

14 September 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: Charles E. Allen
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT: Korea: Olympic Security Situation

1. This morning militant students in South Korea attempted to fire-bomb the Olympic runners and came close to inflicting serious or fatal injuries to the runners. In the Bi-Weekly that was not forwarded to the DCI, we indicated that the most serious threat to the Olympics was from radical South Korean students, not a terrorist action directed by the North Korean regime. In our view, radical South Korean students have broken into smaller, more dedicated groups and appear to be well equipped to do battle with the South Korean police. I note that current intelligence publications over the last several weeks have predicted that radical student activity would likely be at a low level during the Olympics because of public and security forces pressure. This does not seem to be the case.

2. I bring this to your attention because I believe we need to continue to think hard about the present domestic opposition in South Korea to the government and the fact that it is being spearheaded by radical students. It appears to me that we need to look beyond just the Olympics and to think more deeply about the threat the students and other anti-regime dissidents pose to the democratization to South Korea.


Charles E. Allen

Attachment:
As stated

~~Secret~~

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MEMO FOR THE NIO/W

FROM: NWS

SUBJ: Korea Warning Issue

REF: Meeting with CNIC, 9 September 1988

During the referenced meeting I briefed Mr. Ermarth on the current situation in Korea, emphasizing the following points:

** What we had attempted to warn about in our last Bi-Weekly Student Radicals continuing activity through the period of the Olympics) was ongoing;

** That very morning students had rioted in Seoul, but this time with hardhats, gasmasks, and shields, supporting our warning of smaller, more dedicated groups;

** While several intelligence agencies believed the student activity would be at a very low level during the Olympics due to public and security forces pressure, we still believed there was potential for embarrassing clashes and a government crackdown.

Mr Ermarth replied that this was only a marginal warning issue since there was little the U.S. policymaker could do to influence the outcome. While that may be true, I believe this warning is imperative because no one else is warning about it (alternative view), and because there is not only a threat to the democratization process in South Korea, but there is also a direct threat to U.S. citizens attending the Games.

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